



THE

PERPLEXING

PROBLEM.

PS 3089
.T85
Copy 1

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS.

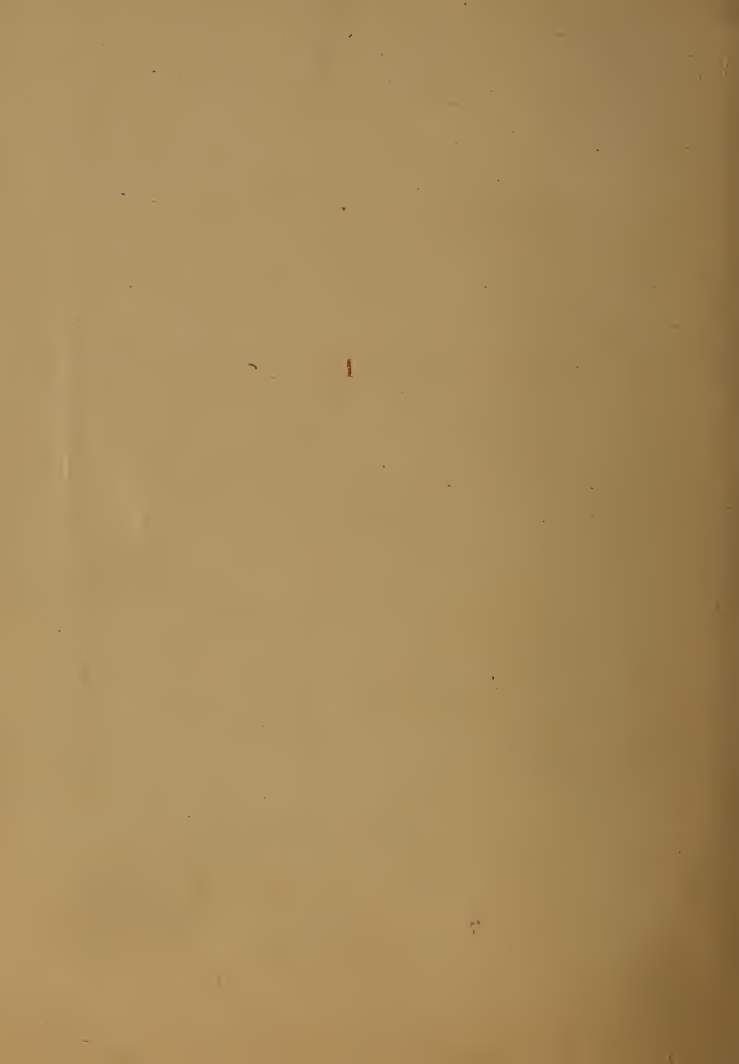
PS 3089

Chap.----- Copyright No.-----

Shelf .T 85

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.





THE
PERPLEXING PROBLEM;

OR,

JUSTICE TO THE INDIAN.

*Justice to the Indian not alone,
But justice alike to every one!*

A POEM, IN THREE PARTS.

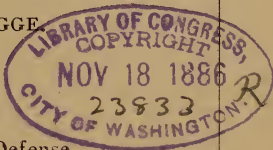
BY

BENJAMIN TRIGGE.

33
PART I.—The Accusation.

PART II.—The Defense.

PART III.—Justice.



PS 3089
.T85

P R E F A C E.

THIS little poem was composed immediately after the Modoc Massacre, upon reading the views expressed by various writers and speakers as to the causes leading to this and other Indian outrages. Among the opinions, that of the Hon. Wendell Phillips being the most impressive.

B. TRIGGE.

BROOKLYN, (E. D.,) N. Y.,
365 Wythe Avenue.

PART I.



The Accusation.

The hue-and-cry goes through the land
Against that bold and warlike band
That we call savage Indian;
With young and old it is the same:
They each and all alike exclaim,
“Annihilate the Indian!”

He kills, they say, both friend and foe,
And brings upon us untold woe,
This miserable Indian!
Outrage and war with him are rife,
And victims feel the scalping knife
Of this bloodthirsty Indian!

He stealthily enters quiet homes,
He heeds not either cries or moans,
This cruel, heartless Indian!
But will with arrow or rifle slay,
And tomahawk all those in his way,
Unmerciful, wild Indian!

He prowls along the trav'ler's path,
Full of evil, devilish wrath,

 This treach'rous, wily Indian!
That he may thus take unaware
The stranger ere he can prepare
 To guard against that Indian!

Friendship to no one will he show,
For such a thing he does not know,

 This dark, unfriendly Indian!
But in a sullen, silent mood
Over his fancied wrongs he'll brood,
 This deep, suspicious Indian!

Firewater is his chief delight,
Which gives him a desire to fight
 Whate'er may cross his path—
Whether bird, beast, or human being,
That will appease the savage spleen
 Of his revengeful wrath.

He glories in the cruel deed
Which makes his victim writhe and bleed,
 And in deep torture languish;
While he will yell in savage tones
To drown the sufferer's dying moans,
 And mock at his great anguish.

'Tis also said he hates all work,
And that he's ever on the lurk
To murder, rob, and ravage;
Or pounce, hawk-like, upon his prey,
And carry it by force away,
This good-for-nothing savage!

His squaw is nothing but a slave,
And prematurely old and grave
By her laborious toil;
While he, the monarch of the plains,
Proudly and scornfully disdains
His noble hands to soil.

Education he doth despise;
It is mysterious in his eyes,
And racks his torpid brain;
He holds such thing in great contempt,
And only hails what is exempt
From serious thought and pain.

Tame the Indian we never can:
No matter how we try or plan
He'll burst all bonds asunder;
Civilization he defies,
In roving life his spirit lies,
That he may spoil and plunder.

Then why should such a lawless band
As this exist in any land,
 Much less a Christian nation?
“Blot him out!” should be the cry;
Let this inhuman Indian die,
 By powder or starvation!

Peace then would reign throughout the land,
When we were rid of this vile band—
 This idle, savage nation;
The warwhoop we should no more fear,
But in its place would only hear
 The hum of civilization.

Our western lands, too, would be free,
No more wild Indians would there be
 Disputing our possession;
But on the Indian's hunting-ground
Towns and cities would be found
 In line of their progression.

PART II.

The Defense.

What the Indian is said to do
Is bad, indeed, if it be true,
And merits condemnation;
But let us see the other side,
And judge aright ere we decide
On his annihilation.

Now, why should we, in frenzied state,
Cry out, "We must annihilate
This miserable Red Man?"
When we with him for slightest cause
Will violate our own made laws,
And cheat whenever we can!

Nay, let us cease thus to exclaim,
And see upon whom rests the blame—
The civilized, or the savage;
Or whether his or our great greed
Causes each cruel, bloody deed
Of murder, strife, and ravage.

A citizen he cannot be
Of this great land of liberty,
His is a proscribed nation;
For we can better by this plan
Deceive this miserable man,
And take his reservation.

We with the Indian treaties make,
And tell him he shall such land take,
And live on it forever;
Yet while we thus with vows beguile,
We in an improved, modern style
These treaties soon dis sever.

Agents we send unto this band
To give protection to his land,
And guard it from transgressors;
Yet they become his greatest foes,
And bring upon him all his woes
By aiding his aggressors.

They with firewater him supply,
Which clouds his brain and fires his eye,
And goads him on to battle;
He will no danger then eschew,
But with our guns and powder, too,
He'll kill both men and cattle.

His hunting-grounds he then must lose,
And if to leave them he refuse,
 To war he'll be subjected;
For in his track the settlers come,
And civilization's noisy hum
 Can never be rejected.

What care we if his lands are tilled,
Or that his grounds are all well filled,
 And ripe with vegetation?
Those things do not our feelings touch—
The land is rich, we need all such
 For schemes of speculation.

Or that there's schools and churches there,
And civilization ev'ry-where
 Upon his reservation?
The white man craves its mineral wealth,
And have it will, by either stealth
 Or war upon the nation.

We do not heed the Indian's prayer,
That we his home and land would spare
 From such annihilation;
Nor do we heed the widow's sigh,
Nor listen to the orphan's cry
 Against such desecration.

For he can use both mind and hand,
And cultivate his prairie land,
As well as o'er it roam ;
And also cipher, read, and write
As well as either black or white,
And likewise love his home

- He's forced to leave his home or die,
And must not ask the reason why
He is so badly treated;
For civilized people surely know
That he to other grounds must go
To have like justice meted.

Banished again from land and home,
Once more he's sent adrift to roam
On some new reservation;
There to remain till, in awhile,
He's driven away, in Indian style,
By this great Christian nation.

Removed by force from place to place
By a civilized, Christian race,
Who mock at his depression,
Can any body wonder why
He's ready then to fight—ay, die—
To keep his own possession ?

Or that, thus maddened by these wrongs,
He whoops his cry and wails his songs
Of bitter lamentation?
Discrimination he'll not make,
But all alike will then partake
Of his retaliation.

If what the Indian does is wrong,
To whom does most the blame belong—
The oppressed, or the oppressor?
If we will cheat him and deceive,
It is but just he should believe
That we are the transgressor.

If civilized nations always fight
For what they think their home and right
Against supposed oppression,
Shall savages not do the same,
And fight for what they justly claim
To be their own possession?

He's worse than coward, worse than knave
That would not fight his home to save
From all who would invade it.
“Back, back!” should ever be his cry;
“For my own home I'll fight—ay, die—
If I can only save it.”

In the earliest, darkest time,
In every land, in every clime,
Freedom and home were e'er sought.
And they who for these blessings stood
Risked all that human beings could,
And boldly for them, too, fought.

PART III.

Justice.

To solve this problem we suggest
The plan which seems to us the best,
And which all should approve;
Which would like justice give to all,
And would the chains which now enthrall
The Indian soon remove:

A citizen of him let us make,
And of our laws let him partake,
And lead a peaceful life;
Punishing him if he do wrong,
Or take what to him don't belong,
By either fraud or strife.

Educate him we also should,
And fill with intellectual food
His unenlightened brain;
Teaching him thus to cease his strife,
And to endeavor in this life
A nobler end to gain.

Land, too, the Indian should receive,
That he his wants may thus relieve
By culturing the soil;
His savage ways he should forsake,
And for himself and children make
A home by honest toil.

Protected thus in every right,
He could alone life's battle fight,
And independent be;
Needing no governmental aid,
And being from each and every raid
Continually free.

Then a good citizen he'd become,
Helping to swell the civilized hum,
Marching progressively;
And gain, instead of savage strife,
A state of peaceful, happy life,
Freedom, prosperity.

If as a nation we him treat,
Then to the Indian we should mete
The rights due to all nations;
Respecting territorial bounds,
Keeping intruders off the grounds
Of treaty reservations.

His land, like ours, should be his own,
And sacred should be every home,
And free from molestation;
All innovation should be curbed,
And none should ever be disturbed
By strife or speculation.

While education would abound,
And civilization hem him round
From border unto border,
We'd have, where lawlessness once stood
And Red and White men shed their blood,
Protection, law, and order.

Justice, then, giving just reward,
Would to each one his dues accord,
No matter who they'd be;
Thus, all being guarded in their right,
We should from the disgraceful sight
Of Indian wars be free.

Peace and prosperity will reign
Over the earth's entire domain,
From one end to the other,
When man with man shall justly deal,
And toward each other act and feel
The part of friend and brother.

•

In the distant, future day,
When prejudice has died away
Against that savage people,
And history's pages shall proclaim
The deeds of wrong against the same
Performed by civilized people,

'Twill bring the blush to many a face,
And make them feel the deep disgrace
Of such vile degradation;
Yea, almost make them wish they could
Blot out forever with their blood
That stain from off the nation.

Then shall the people wonder why
There e'er was raised the hue-and-cry
Of Indian extirpation;
And feel it right and just they should,
By actions noble, kind, and good,
Make proper reparation.

Just in deed as well as name,
The golden rule our end and aim,
Our motto then would be—
I will with all men wrong eschew,
And only to all others do
As they should do to me.

With this grand motto in our mind
No evil could a place there find,
If we worked on its plan;
Justice alone would reign supreme,
And man would love his fellow-being
As only God loves man.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 018 604 114 8

